

HONEYSUCKLE POINT RAILWAY WORKSHOPS

**AT
NEWCASTLE, N.S.W.**



NOMINATION FOR HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER

Engineering Heritage Committee
Newcastle Division, Icaust
May, 1996

INTRODUCTION

The site of the Honeysuckle Point Railway Workshops is the place where the first sod was turned at the ceremonial opening of the Hunter River Railway Company on 8th November, 1854. This was to become the third operating steam railway in Australia when it commenced on 27th March, 1857 after a change to Government ownership.

The Workshops commenced being used for the building of rolling stock in 1856 and were in continuous use until 1990 when wagons were still being repaired there. This is the longest period of continuous use in Australia (133 years).

The Workshops were developed significantly in the 1870's from when most of the present buildings date. However, the brick sub-structure (pit) of the first turntable, dating from the 1850's, is still in existence and has been briefly uncovered for Archaeological investigation before being covered over again for protection. This structure appears to be the oldest surviving in Australia.

The conserved and restored buildings form the only remaining coherent set of railway workshop buildings from the period in Australia. They also contain, in the former boiler shop, the only rope driven gantry crane left in original condition in Australia. The crane is of 16 ton capacity and was built by Craven Bros of Manchester. Research so far has indicated that it is possibly the only such crane surviving in the world, but some of the type could still be in use in countries such as India, in particular.

The Workshops in total, and the Craven Crane by itself, have been the subject of heritage studies and a conservation plan by C & MJ Doring Pty Ltd. With the permission of the authors the Honeysuckle Point Heritage Study (2 volumes) and the Craven Crane Conservation Plan (1 volume) form part of this submission. No attempt has been made to produce a summary of the Doring documents for the purposes of this submission, so as not to run the risk of omitting important material.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The complete Statement of Significance for the Honeysuckle Point Railway Workshops can be found on pages 47 to 51 of Volume 1 of the Honeysuckle Point Heritage Study which is appended to this submission.

Commemorative Plaque Nomination Form

Date: 23rd May 1996

To:

Commemorative Plaque Sub-Committee
The Institution of Engineers, Australia
Engineering House
11 National Circuit
BARTON ACT 2600

From: Newcastle Division
Engineering Heritage Committee
Nominating Body

The following work is nominated for a:-

* Historic Engineering Marker

Name of work: Honeysuckle Point Railway Workshops

Location, including address and map grid reference if a fixed work:

Merewether Street, Wharf Road, Newcastle:

Map Reference: 9232-2-S Newcastle 852 561

Owner: NSW Government - Honeysuckle Development Corporation

The owner has been advised of the nomination of the work and has indicated (attach a copy of letter if available): Acceptance of Nomination

Access to site: Future public space

Future care and maintenance of the work: Honeysuckle Development Corporation

Name of sponsor: Honeysuckle Development Corporation

For a NEL, is an information plaque required? N/A

Chairperson of Nominating Committee

Chairperson of Division Heritage Committee/Panel

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Name of work: Honeysuckle Point Railway Workshops

Year of construction or manufacture: 1856 onwards

Period of operation: 1856 to 1990

Physical condition: Buildings conserved/restored, Craven Crane restored (see also statements in conservation report)

Engineering Heritage Significance:-

Technological/scientific value: Craven Crane is only working rope-drive gantry crane in Australia, possibly the world

Historical value: Contains oldest surviving railway workshop buildings in Australia

Social value: Largest employer in Newcastle before B.H.P.

Landscape or townscape value: Essential element of site re-development

Rarity: Some elements unique in Australia

Representativeness: Mid to late 19th century railway technology

Contribution to the nation or region: Social/Infrastructure

Contribution to engineering: Railway development in 19th Century

Persons associated with the work: Documentation scant, but probably J Whitton it al

Integrity: Conserved and partially restored, crane in working order

Authenticity: Varies

Comparable works (a) in Australia: Nil in this condition

(b) overseas: No cranes known

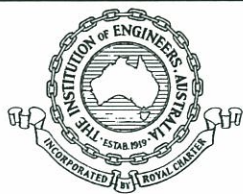
Statement of significance, its location in the supporting documentation:

Heritage Study, Vol 1, pp 47-51

Citation (70 words in optimum): See attached

Attachments to submission (if any): Honeysuckle Point Heritage Study Volumes 1 & 2 and Craven Crane Conservation Report

Proposed location of plaque (if not at site): Outside of Boiler Shop



**HISTORIC ENGINEERING
MARKER**

**HONEYSUCKLE POINT RAILWAY
WORKSHOPS**

THE HONEYSUCKLE POINT RAILWAY WORKSHOPS WERE ESTABLISHED ON THIS SITE IN 1856 TO SERVICE THE INDEPENDENT NORTHERN N.S.W. RAILWAY SYSTEM ORIGINATING FROM NEWCASTLE. THE BUILDINGS REMAINING ARE RARE EXAMPLES OF THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES USED FOR LATE 19TH CENTURY INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS AND THE 16 TON ROPE-DRIVEN CRANE IN THIS BUILDING, BUILT BY CRAVEN BROTHERS OF MANCHESTER (RESTORED IN 1996) REPRESENTS THE CULMINATION OF 19TH CENTURY MATERIALS HANDLING TECHNOLOGY.

**DEDICATED BY
THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, AUSTRALIA AND
HONEYSUCKLE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION 1996**



HONEYSUCKLE

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17 May, 1996

Mr Bill Jordan
Chairman
Newcastle Division Engineering Heritage Committee
The Institution of Engineers Australia
PO Box 238C
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

Dear Bill

re: **Honeysuckle Point Railway Workshops and Craven Brothers Rope
Driven Crane.**

I am pleased to advise that the Corporation's Board has supported an application to your Institution for the installation of an Historic Engineering Marker Plaque at the Honeysuckle Point Railway Workshops.

I look forward to working with the Institution on this most worthwhile project.

Yours sincerely

Steven Gorton
OPERATIONS MANAGER

Honeysuckle Newcastle ...a place for people

A NSW GOVERNMENT PROJECT
Managed by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning

